



Eczema



Overview

This is a name for several forms of swelling of the skin. We also call it "dermatitis." In many people it affects the cheeks, the insides of the elbows, or the skin behind the knees. You may have dermatitis on your hands or feet, or on your buttocks. It isn't a contagious condition.

Causes

We don't know the exact cause of eczema. It may be linked to something in your environment. It may also be linked to the genes you have inherited. Eczema can be triggered by itchy clothing, harsh soaps and lotions. It can be triggered by things you're allergic to, such as pollen, animals and certain foods. And it can be triggered by stress.

Symptoms

Symptoms typically include a rash of dry, red, puffy, itchy skin. Scratching it may make the swelling and itchiness even worse. Your rash may leak clear fluid. It may crust over.

Treatment

Eczema can be managed with medications, and by avoiding triggers. You may benefit from using a milder soap, or by learning to cope with stress, or by staying away from pets. You may need to use a moisturizer regularly. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that is right for you.